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QUESTIONS FROM AUSTRALIA.

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1. In one of the suttas it is said that four things: greed, illusion, anger and fear lead to a man's downfall. Is fear the cetasika dosa coupled with, for example, worry, or what are its constituents that distinguish it from straight aversion?

A. Fear is another form of aversion, fear does not like the object which is experienced. There are so many forms and gradations of aversion. Hate is another one. We use different words to show different aspects and situations in which it arises. Worry, kukkucchā pertains to the past: regret about the good you did not do, and about the wrong you did. In the suttas are often different words used for the same cetasika.

For example, Dhammapada 212, and following:

From endearment springs grief, from endearment springs fear;  
for him who is wholly free from endearment there is no grief, much less fear.

2. If one is practising samatha with the object being the development of mettā, why is concentration on the concept of mettā a condition for the cetasika to arise? It does not seem to work the same way with other cetasikas, say, anger, or sati!

A. Samatha is not a matter of concentration in the first place. It is a matter of right understanding of the object. If there is no mettā when one is with other people, and one does not know the characteristic of mettā when there is metta, and one cannot distinguish it from attachment (and they may arise so closely one after the other), one cannot develop mettā as an object of calmness. One cannot force it either: come on mettā...

Metta has beings as object, this is a concept. The development of mettā with the aim to become tranquil (tranquil in the wholesome way) is kusala, it is kusala on the level of samatha. We can have moments of metta in our daily life. This is better than akusala. Sometimes there may be mindfulness of nāma and rūpa, but not so often. At other times there are opportunities for dāna or sīla, or ← mettā. In Sri Lanka we discussed so often about mettā, and this was a condition for saññā to remember ← mettā more often. It can be accumulated. It is beneficial. Are we not with human beings often? ← . . . . .

3. Khun Sujin used to say it was more difficult to know the mind-door than the sense-door, because the mind-door is hidden. Does this mean it is easier to know seeing-consciousness, etc. as they are, than to know thinking? Wouldn't it depend a lot on accumulations?

A. So long as we do not know nama as nāma quite different from rūpa, and rūpa as rūpa, quite different from nāma, it shows there is no knowledge yet, no precise knowledge of nāma and rūpa. We are confused as to the different doorways, there is no knowledge of one object at the time as it presents itself through one of the six doors.

For example, when there is seeing, seeing knows visible object. But it always seems to us that paying attention to shape and form, which is not seeing, but thinking of a concept, takes place at the same time. And we are not sure either when it is seeing which presents itself to sati which starts to develop, and when it is visible object. . . . The first vipassanā nāna stage, which is not even mahā-vipassana but still 'taruna-vipassanā' or 'tender insight' (Visuddhimagga), knows nāma as nāma and rūpa as rūpa and this has to be known through the mind-door, in a mind-door process. Through the mind-door both nāma and rūpa can be known. Through the sense-door, that is, in a sense-door process, only rūpa can be experienced, not nāma. At that first stage of 'tender insight' there is no confusion about nāma and rūpa and no more confusion as to the different doorways through which realities appear.

At this moment we know so little. There are objects which impinge on the different sense-doors and then they are known through the mind -door, and we think of concepts all the time, many different kinds of processes, through different doorways. Rūpas through the sense-door, rūpas through the mind-door, and thinking of concepts. When there is the development of satipatthāna it is not a question of catching the different processes, but any reality which presents itself when there is right mindfulness should be studied. Khun Sujin explained that also right thinking, sammā-sankappa, (vitakka cetasika) is needed which 'touches' the right object.

When there is not yet right thinking and right mindfulness, visible object is difficult to know, seeing is difficult to know, thinking is difficult to know, all the doorways are one great mixture, no idea of mind-door, that is why Khun Sujin said, the

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mind-door is still hidden. Have we any idea of what seeing really is? We cannot see seeing, it has no shape or form, it cannot be touched. It can only be known through the mind-door, by paññā. We may have a notion of what 'thinking of a concept' is, it occurs all the time. But do we really know it precisely, as a nāma, as an element.

which thinks? Does sammā-sankappa 'touch' the right object, is it known by paññā, when it appears to the sati? Or do we think about our thinking? Not only nāma is difficult to know. So long as we do not know the difference between nāma and rūpa and there is not yet 'right thinking', also rūpa is difficult.

Some people in the Wat Mahā-dhatu, and I was among them, used to say that maybe rūpas presenting themselves through the body-sense were easier to know. Khun Sujin answered that also the experience of rūpas through the body should be known, and who is sure about the difference? She did not say: this is easy, or know this first. She did not say seeing is easier than thinking. Seeing is a nāma, it can be known only through the mind-door. Visible object is rūpa, but can we say, 'now let us plan to know visible object first?' Nobody can plan anything, but surreptitiously we may try. We are inclined to try to be aware of rūpas which we think relatively easier to know. That is not the way. But if we realise that we are planning, we may stop doing it.

There is saññā which remembers what was heard. For instance, we hear Khun Sujin say on the tape: 'Seeing is not the (visible) object, the object is not the seeing'. Saññā remembers, first we repeat these words mentally, these words suddenly come up when we are busy with our daily tasks. It is the way saññā works, we do not have to do anything. Then it can happen that sati starts to study, sometimes seeing, however imperfect this study may be. And sometimes it may study something which is appearing through the eyes, not a special thing or person on which we focus. And how we are used to always focus on people and things.

4. Q. In the development of the eightfold Path, does paññā have to be occurring many, many times very strongly before the first Vipassanā-nāna is reached, or would one say that the first vipassanā-nāna was the first moment of a strong level of paññā?

5. There have to be many, many times of 'study with sati', and also samma-vayama is needed, and that is the way paññā can grow, Khun Sujin always says. What is strong paññā, what is strong sati? Khun Sujin said that at the first stage of vipassanā sati has been accumulated more than when you just start, but is it really strong? She said, just as when you have passed an examination, the tender insight, the knowledge has to be applied over and over

again, because many different kinds of nāma and rūpa have to be known. At the first stage one does not know all kinds of nāma and rūpa. — But one has not the doubts one had at first: is this nāma or is this rūpa. After two more stages the first stage of mahā-vipassanā can be reached. That stage of paññā is stronger, but compared with the stage of the sotāpannā it is still weak. The acquired knowledge has to be applied over and over again. Even the stage of sotapanna is not enough. Namas and rupas have to be studied until one has attained arahatship.

One thing is sure: there have to be countless moments of 'study with sati' so that paññā can grow. It is not a matter of sudden strong shoots of paññā. You do not even see the buds at first. Khun Sujin said 'But it is coming, it is coming. But you do not know when you look at the branch where the buds will come out, still, a beginning is there.'

Vipassana nāna is not something which suddenly appears one morning when you wake up: hurrah, it is there. There have to be many moments of study, and that is the way paññā can grow, and how could we say: many moments of strong paññā? It is a matter of development, of growth. I think that little by little doubts are cleared about nāma and rūpa. Even the first stage is only a beginning, but this should not discourage us.

Khun Sujin said: vipassana nāna will not come when you are waiting for it, but when you are not waiting for it it will arise, but of course when the right conditions have been cultivated: study with sati.

In the Dhammapada (vs 121, 122) it is explained that evil is accumulated little by little, and so is kusala. You may think: it is so little, but every drop helps to fill a jar:

Despise not evil, saying, 'It will not come nigh unto me'; by the falling of drops even a water-jar is filled; likewise the fool, gathering little by little, fills himself with evil.

Despise not merit, saying, 'It will not come nigh unto me'; even by the falling of drops a water-jar is filled; likewise the wise man, gathering little by little, fills himself with good.

At first it is difficult to know what the right sati is. For example, when we think that we do not focus on visible object but 'study' what appears through the eyes, it may be only thinking with moha. The eyes are open, and we think: now we do not focus, but there are bound to be many moments of javana cittas with moha in between the seeing. When we plan sati, or cling to it, there are akusala cittas instead of sati.

Khun Sujin said: forget about yourself, that is the best way to cultivate kusala. If we think of our progress, and when will we

reach something, it is time for akusala citta. We should not despise any kind of kusala. Opening the door for somebody is a kind of sila. At the postoffice people are rushing for one another to hold the door open. One may enjoy in the other's kusalā. Sometimes it is time for dana, sometimes for sila, → sometimes for sati which studies a nama or rupa. ← Sati arises before you can plan it, if it is the right time for it to arise. If we plan it it is not sati. How can we be choosy about the kind of kusala which arises already? And when it is time for pañña, there is pañña which grows, in stages, nobody can stop it.

When one thinks: 'It is all too difficult. I would rather sit and concentrate on one object, that is simpler.', one misleads oneself. It is not the right samatha to think: 'I will sit and concentrate'. Samatha has to be kusala and right understanding has to know and understand the subject of samatha and has to know very precisely when the citta is kusala and when it is akusala. Samatha is a kind of pañña and pañña is not easy.

People often say that energy is necessary. Yes, but energy is not self, it is an element, arising because of conditions. If one knows the value of all kinds of kusala and sees the disadvantage of akusala, there are conditions of right energy or effort, for any kind of kusala for which there is opportunity. When it is energy for awareness of any reality which appears now (not energy for awareness later on) there can be right energy of the eightfold Path, if it accompanies right mindfulness of the right object.

A sense of urgency helps right energy. Sutta texts we read about this subject can fill us one day with despair, or another day it can be the right condition for right effort. We should read such texts with right understanding. There is a sutta about not delaying sati until one is old. When one gets older one may be desperate: maybe it is too late for me already. Soon I will get weak because of old age. But if one reads with right understanding, one sees: sati should not be put off, it should be accumulated right at this moment, it is never lost. And so I found that the following text was helping me, for instance before I go to sleep: I may not wake up again, what else should be done but being mindful of any reality which appears?

Gradual Sayings, Book of the Fives, Ch VI, par. 4, Times for striving:

Monks, there are these five wrong times for striving. What five?

Herein a monk is old, overcome by old age. Monks, this is the first wrong time for striving.

A monk is ill, overcome by illness. Monks, this is the second....

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There is a famine, crops are bad, food is hard to get and it is not easy to keep oneself going by gleaning and favours. Monks, this is the third...

Fear is about, perils of robbers, and the country-folk mount their carts and drive away. Monks, this is the fourth...

Again, monks, the Order is rent; then there is reviling between one another, accusation between one another, quarreling between one another, repudiation between one another; and they of little faith do not find faith there and the faithful become otherwise. Monks, this is the fifth wrong time for striving....

Faith is confidence in wholesomeness. When there are quarrels in the Sangha it harms one's confidence in wholesomeness. Then we read about five right times for striving, which are the opposites of the above mentioned. It does not mean that sati can only be developed when one is young, but it should not be put off. This is the function of right effort. Thinking of the task ahead and of how little one knows can fill one with despair, but sometimes right effort can perform its function, one knows: mindfulness right now is just necessary. When older, or when sick, the bodily condition conditions cittas, it cannot be denied. When one develops right understanding, one need not be oppressed by old age. Body may be sick, but mind may not be sick. (Nakulapitar)

5. Q. There are many levels of sati and paññā. Sati at the level of giving (who 'remembers' to give), paññā which understands the value of samatha and understands the practice of it, and samma-sati which 'remembers' the nāma and rūpa of the present moment. Have all these levels got a common function which can be described?

A. Sati 'remembers' what is kusala and it stops the citta from akusala. Thus, sati is not the same as saññā which recognizes or 'marks' an object so that it can be recognized later on. Saññā recognizes or remembers, but it has a function different from sati which 'remembers' what is wholesome and stops the citta from akusala. Saññā can also be right saññā, saññā which remembers about the right practice of vipassanā, but it is different from sati which in vipassanā 'studies' nāma and rūpa. The term remembering is only a term, but if we understand the functions of sati and saññā we will not confuse them. The common function of sati in all levels of kusala is that it prevents citta from akusala and keeps it on kusala, thus we say: it 'remembers' kusala, what level it may be. As you say, when there is dāna, sati is not forgetful, it prevents citta to let go of this precious opportunity that we can give!

When there is opportunity to spare an insect's life it is sati which is not forgetful of this opportunity for sīla. Or, when being polite or helping someone with a small gesture , it is sati which does not despise even the smallest ways of kusala, sati is not forgetful. It is sati which can be so quick that we help at once, no need to think about it. And when we are forgetful we are so slow in our reactions, the opportunity is past already. When we are with other people, it is sati which is not forgetful of mettā, and thus there can be some moments of calmness instead of irritation when these people are impolite, or unpleasant. Sati in vipassana is not forgetful of the nama and rupa which appears, and thus there can be study of them. All levels of kusala and thus all levels of sati arise because of conditions, not because we choose. There is not one level which has to be first, there is no 'has to'. But when there is dana or sila, also dana and sila can be performed with mindfulness of nāma and rūpa , no self which performs them. And the development of metta, moments of calm can also be object of awareness, no self which cultivates such moments..

6. An anāgāmī is born only into certain rupa-brhma-planes. Birth into these planes is the result of a high degree of jhāna in the javana process before cuti-citta. Does this mean that all anagamis who don't become arahats in the same life have to have cultivated jhāna?

A. An anāgāmī does not have any more attachment to sensuous objects and no dosa anymore. Since he has no desire for sights, sounds, etc. would it not be natural for him to think more of wholesome subjects, such as the Buddha's virtues? And since his mindfulness has been developed, he could also be mindful of such moments of calm as not self. There may even have been conditions for jhāna , he may have developed it in former lives. When there are conditions, jhāna could arise, it is not a matter of trying very hard, or trying to concentrate. Our accumulations work their way, nobody can stop them. Some anagamis may attain enlightenment to the stage of arahatship in this life, for others there may be conditions for jhana and this may produce birth in rūpa-brāhma-planes. Thus, the answer is: everything occurs according to conditions.

7. Two questions relating to kamma: I thought that drinking intoxicants, although a precept, did not constitute akusala kamma. If this is right, why in many suttas it is said that drinking leads to rebirth in states of woe? Only by association with the other

<sup>1)</sup> But this does not lead to jhāna.

kammic acts being more likely?

A. When we read in the Atth. (Courses of Immoral Action, 97,f.) about the ten akusala kamma patha we see that there are certain factors which make it a kusala kamma patha which is completed. In the case of life-taking: five constituent factors: a being, consciousness of there being a living creature, intention of killing effort and consequent death. For each of the ten there are certain constituent factors in order that it is completed course of action and this is capable of producing an unhappy rebirth. When the action is not completed it is still capable of producing akusala vipaka: in the course of life. Thus, the ten are especially treated and their constituent factors are explained and the doorways. Does this mean that there is no other akusala kamma apart from this? What about mutilating someone, without having the intention of killing him? Or hitting someone very hard? I think that is stronger than merely akusala citta. I think that

← it depends on the intensity of akusala whether it is akusala citta or akusala kamma. Nobody can point out exactly (except the Buddha) which kamma produces which result.

The Buddha warned people that intoxicants lead to the states of woe, they are a condition for it. For instance, the least result of intoxicants is madness. Can one then cultivate kusala which could produce a happy rebirth? And, as you say, the taking of drugs or alcoholic drinks can lead to all kinds of akusala kamma.

There is one kamma among the ten, harsh speech. The sotapanna has not eradicated harsh speech, but he cannot commit akusala kamma which leads to an unhappy rebirth. Thus, when we read lists of kammas, we have to consider many factors. Kamma is intricate.

7b Q: Can dreaming with kusala citta or akusala citta constitute kamma  
A. I do not think so. When you dream that you kill, it is not killing, no intention to kill, merely akusala citta.

8. When someone yells at you one may remember cause and effect, and know that he is hurting himself most. Compassion can arise. Could this also occur for those who have not heard about cause and effect in this lifetime?

A. One may not have heard of Dhamma, but one may have accumulations for compassion and then it may arise. One may consider how unhappy someone makes himself by yelling like that.

But surely, having heard of Dhamma and learnt of cause and effect is a condition for many more kusala cittas; right understanding helps most for the development of kusala.

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I want to add: I just heard on the tape Khun Sujin saying: even if one knows that seeing is only an element, visible object is only an element, one may still take them for someone or something, even if one does not say it. We may talk about elements all the time, and how we take realities for self! Paññā which realises nāma and rūpa as elements is not the same as talking about elements, or thinking about them.

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